is already paid as part of the equated freight to indigenous urea manufacturing units, it is in-built in the rates of concession payable under the Concession Scheme for decontrolled phosphatic and potassic fertilizers.

Direct distribution of fertilizers subsidy to farmers

595. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Alagh Committee has recommended to start a pilot project for direct distribution of fertilizer subsidy to farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;'

(c) whether the recommendation has been accepted;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (b) Working Group headed by Dr. Y.K. Alagh has *inter alia* recommended that a scheme for disbursal of subsidy directly to farmers in three selected districts where reliable land records are available may be formulated on an experimental basis.

(c) to (e) The recommendations of the Working Group are under examination of the Government.

Competition in wheat import

†596. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to import wheat in view of its shortage and its high price in the country;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is a fact that right to import wheat has been awarded to the public sector agencies; and

(d) if so, the reasons for not allowing the creation of competition in the field of importing wheat in the country by inviting private sector also?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The State Trading Corporation (STC) has been permitted to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat. The reasons are rationale behind importing the wheat, *inter alia*, are reduced availability of wheat stocks in the Central Pool, high ruling market prices, higher offtake, lower procurement levels and to augment the domestic availability of wheat.

(c) Yes, Sir. The import will be done through STC.

(d) The STC is following a transparent commercial procedure for import of the wheat, by calling for open global tenders, which is open to the private sector to participate in.

Offtake of wheat

†597. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether 12 to 14 lakh tonnes of wheat is being lifted monthly from Food Corporation of India for public distribution system and for the various Goverment schemes;

(b) if not, the facts thereof and the details of wheat lifted during January, 2005 to December, 2005;

(c) whether it is a fact that approximately 66 lakh tonnes of wheat was in the godowns of Food Corporation of India as on 1st January, 2006; and

(d) if so, whether this quantity was sufficient till April, 2006?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.